

# WHY COLLEGE GIRLS ARE GOOD HOUSEKEEPERS.

ONCE upon a time a prominent scientist was asked: "Why does a bucket of water weigh no more after a live fish has been thrown in?" He wrote a learned explanation. Other scientists took up the question. Fish were dissected, their lungs were examined under the microscope, all the laboratories looked like fish markets, controversy ran high. New theories of specific gravity were revolutionizing science, when an inquiring small boy discovered by experiment that three pounds of live fish do add just three pounds to the weight of a bucket of water. Moral: It is just as well to know that a thing is so, before trying to find out why it is so.

In a recent issue of the Journal (March 21), Mrs. Henrotin discussed the question, "Why college women are not good housekeepers."

But are college women bad housekeepers? No one has the least right to say that, as a class, college women are bad housekeepers, who is not prepared to prove by testimony which would be admitted in a court of law that the proportion of bad housekeepers is greater among college women than among other women of their rank in life. They have the right common to all citizens of being presumed innocent until they are proven guilty, and the burden of proof rests with the other side. To be sure, they belong to the human race; they are not exempt from its weaknesses and limitations. It would be a cause of real sorrow if they could not count among their number a fair proportion of bad housekeepers, for then it would

have to be granted that the college woman is different from other women, an anomalous creature, "neither flesh, fish nor good red herring."

"Great Is Science!"

But you know one or more college women who are bad housekeepers. There is an old fallacy in argument called post hoc, ergo propter hoc, which is, being interpreted, "if you die after breaking a looking glass, you do not die on account of having broken the looking glass—unless you eat the mercury off the back."

If a woman is a bad housekeeper after taking her A. B. degree, it is not necessarily on account of it. No woman is either a good or bad housekeeper on account of college training any more than on account of having red hair. These accessories, at most, indicate tendencies.

"But the trouble is," says Mrs. Henrotin, "that a girl educated as Grace has been loses all wish to know the details of housekeeping, and finds it a bore." You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink, be he a plough horse or a racer. Shirk and obstinacy were in the world long before there was such a thing as a college curriculum. In fact, no one is borne to her degree on "flowery beds of ease." It means four years of hard work, much of which is as monotonous and dry in detail and might as well be called a bore as any part of housekeeping.

A certain wealthy woman, prominent in Back Bay society, has four daughters. Two daughters went to college, one to Smith and one to Vassar, both making good records. The other two stayed at home. To each one of the four in turn the mother has resigned the whole charge of the house for a year. They might ask for suggestions, none were given gratuitously. The college-bred as well as the home-staying daughters were successful. What does this prove? Nothing. But it proves just as much as the case of one college-bred woman, who is a bad housekeeper. One swallow does not make a Summer.

The women on a college faculty would naturally be classed among women of markedly studious rather than of domestic tastes. Yet twenty unmarried women on the faculty of Smith College are keeping house, and they keep house well. Twenty swallows might be considered a fair indication of Spring.

Yet if a college course has no bearing on the practical affairs of life, why should a girl take it unless for professional purposes? Other things being equal, mental discipline in any line tells in every other. The two things that underlie

successful work in college are the foundation of successful work in life—system and adaptability. They are necessary to "Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief; doctor, lawyer, merchant chief"—and housekeeper.

The independence which a girl necessarily acquires in a four years' absence from home is not in itself a bad foundation. Neither is the life by any means unpractical. One does not realize the thousand and one things the college girl does for herself that she would never think of doing if she were at home, where she could call on her mother or the servants.

Whoever heard of a college girl with a maid? Yes, one did come to Smith once. Neither she nor the maid stayed long. They were not without their use, however; they were a college joke for a year and a day. Who presses the girls' organdies, if they themselves don't, rich and poor alike? Who washes and irons their dainty bureau covers and tea cloths? Who makes dramatic costumes, when the tax is so limited that they can't afford to have it done. Did you ever breakfast with a college girl in her room?

If you haven't seen these things, don't think you know the real college girl. If you have seen how perfect a mistress she is of her toy housekeeping you will have confidence enough to say: "Be thou ruler over ten cities."

"One hears much complaint of the direction and character of female education. It is dolefully affirmed that young ladies learn how to sing operas, but not how to keep house; that they can conjugate Greek verbs, but cannot make bread; that they are good for pretty toying, but not for homely using. Doubtless there is foundation for this remark, or it would never have been made. But I have been in the East and the West, and the North and the South; I know that I have seen the best society, and I have seen the very bad, if not the worst; and I never met a woman whose superior education, whose piano, whose pencil, whose German or French, or any school accomplishments, or even whose novels, clashed with her domestic duties. I have read of them in books; I did hear of one once; but I never met one—not one. I have seen women, through love of gossip, through indolence, through sheer famine of mental pabulum, leave undone things that ought to be done, rush to the assembly, the lecture room, the sewing circle or vegetate in squalid, shabby, unwholesome homes; but I never saw education run to ruin."

A course in domestic science in our preparatory schools sounds well, and is a salve to the conscience of the mother who does not want to "bother" to teach her daughter. But even such a course as this is not a sure panacea for all the vices of college women.

Great is science, but not everything can be taught in

the schools. In a cooking school the most favorable conditions are prearranged. The milk doesn't sour, the meat doesn't spoil, unexpected company does not drop in five minutes before lunch. "The law of the unexpected is family law, and wits are sharpened in facing continual small emergencies, whereas in these institutions routine is inflexible and the child hardens in it like a fly in amber, and never gets out."

What is the conclusion of the whole matter? Ever since the first college for women was founded the college girl has been regarded as an independent species, endowed like the Kansas man, with "green ears, a striped back and iridescent tail feathers." It isn't worth while to fuss about it. Like Charlotte, she will have to go on placidly "cutting bread and butter," or like Zadoc Pine say: "It amuses them, and don't hurt me, and keeps the durned fools laffin'."

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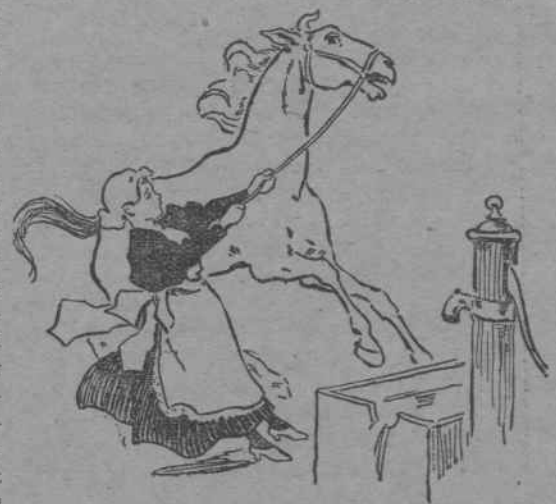
"She Washes and Irons Her Dainty Bureau Covers."



"The Small Boy Settled the Controversy."



"Like Charlotte, the College Girl Will Have to Go on Placidly Cutting Bread and Butter."



"You Can't Make the Horse Drink."

Work in College Gives system and Adaptability So Necessary to—



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